

POULTRY DEPARTMENT.

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How I Succeeded With Poultry in South Florida.

A lady in Lee county, Florida, writing to the Southern Ruralist says:

I will give you my personal experience in poultry-raising. I am a lover of poultry and I do not think any one will make much success at poultry unless they do love them.

Now I hope that what experience I've had will help some one if you deem it good enough to print.

The first thing to consider is, which breed to select. For what suits one next in importance is to have them will not always suit another. The thoroughbred. One naturally will take better care of fine poultry than of poor, scrubby ones. There is ever so much more pleasure in a flock of all one color than one of every color.

I have tried several breeds, among them Barred Plymouth Rocks, White Leghorns, White Wyandottes, etc., but now I raise only Brown Leghorns, and consider them superior to any I've ever tried. I prefer them for several reasons. First, they are hardy, quick grown, small eaters, good foragers, clean-looking, and last but not least, they are great egg-producers. Their eggs are good-sized, white-shelled. The chicks feather out young, so they show up well in coop at market. Their large, bright combs are an attraction, too, I find they sell as well or better than others. I sell my young cockerels at about twelve weeks old. They net me all the way from 35 to 50 cents at that age. Key West is our market.

It is an excellent one for chicken and eggs. Eggs never sell for less than 20 cents, and from that to 50 cents a dozen. I send my fowls to market in coop of laths, made light with good bottom and water-cup fastened in.

Feed old stock mash in morning, whole grain at night, as they have free range. I only feed twice a day. I began keeping account the first of January and up to date, October 24th, I find that feed and other expenses amount to \$45.23, while the receipts are \$84.16, which leaves a clear profit of \$38.99, besides 150 more fowls than I started with.

I have not had a sick bird for more than two years. At that time I was raising White Leghorns and they had the roup. The best remedy I found was: Take 3 tablespoonsful of kerosene oil, 2 of lard, 1 of glycerine and 5 drops carbolic acid; heat lard until it melts, then mix, grease under the throat and the head, let a few drops go down the throat and a little go up the nostrils. I found this very effective when not too far gone. When the head begins to swell the best and cheapest way is to use the hatchet, for doctoring roup is not a pleasant task nor is it often followed with much satisfaction. I have never had any experience with other diseases, so cannot give any advice on them.

While there is a good profit in raising fowls here, the cost is great, too; feed is high. Corn costs \$1.65 per 100 pounds; wheat \$2.20, oats \$1.75, bran and shorts \$1.70.

We have good houses; three at present, with good floors, which we find keeps down fleas. Also have to screen them in on account of the mosquitoes.

I used an incubator in the spring with good results. It is a small one and hot water. I had very little trouble with it. I think the hot water ones control the temperature better than hot air, our climate is so variable. I followed directions sent with machine, which was to air and cool the eggs twice a day and to fill and clean lamp daily. At the last I aired eggs longer with better results. I averaged 76 per cent. The chicks lived and grew as well as those hatched with hens.

I feed little chicks oat flake the first week; after that crushed wheat, cracked corn and occasionally a mash of shorts. One feed they seemed to enjoy was fish boiled and feed until a crumbly mass; feed in trough. I give this about once a week. I raised about 300; have on hand now about 185, mostly pullets. They are beauties.

The surest and only way to succeed is to keep everything clean, plenty of clean, cool water, plenty of grit, and keep off vermin. A chicken requires a great deal of water in hot weather. It seems to me that every one should know that, but if they do, they don't all attend to it, as a visit to a neighbor's poultry yard recently showed every water vessel empty and dry.

Care of the Breeding-Pen.

Writing to the Mobile Register, Mrs. W. H. Miller, a Florida poultry-raiser, says:

"In the Northern and Middle states the breeding-pens are not mated till February. Here in Florida we have to be ready to supply hatchable eggs by the 1st of October. And the writer will be ready to supply them by September 1, next season. Being a Northern woman, I did not learn that till this fall, the conditions here being so different. It takes people from further North two or three years to get into the Southern ways. The earlier one hatches, the more profitable poultry is. One can have pullets laying the year round, when hatched from October to May. When the hens quit laying on account of moulting, there are pullets to take their places. And where we mate up breeding-pens the middle of August, we have to have pullets which were hatched in November or December. Male birds should not be less than ten months old, and eighteen months old would be better. In mating Leghorns, that is where they are penned, one can use from ten to fifteen females, and in the larger breeds from six to twelve. I put eight to ten Wyandotte females to each pen, and where the mating is not a special one, change the males every week, letting the males have a rest and feed them well. I hang a tin cup up out of reach of the hens and give the male an extra feed of grain every day. Some males will never eat with the hens, they are so gallant.

"Our breeding-houses are 10x14 feet, built open-slatted, that is, an inch opening between every board. The houses which we will build in the future will be a shed roof, open on all sides. Nothing but a roof. That is all that is necessary in Florida. The roosts are about 12 inches above a dropping-board, which is about 3 feet from the floor (dirt floor). I have a shelf built up about 18 inches off the ground that I keep the water vessel, box for grit, oyster-shell and charcoal on. All the floor space is given to scratching-material, of which I keep about six inches of hay, and when it gets broken fine I renew the scratching material. The nests are also built up off the floor.

Our yards are in grass and measure about 50x125 feet. The morning feed for each pen is fed in the litter, consisting of oats, wheat or cracked corn, or one of the prepared scratching feeds. We use the mixture one morning, oats another, and so on, aiming to give them a change, at noon a couple of handfuls of grain in litter. About five times a week feed soft feed at night, about half a feed, consisting of equal parts of bran, shorts and alfalfa meal, one-tenth cottonseed meal and a little salt. If one has vegetables, it makes the feed very palatable to the fowls to mix boiled vegetables with the mash. Unless one feeds meat scraps in a box, giving it to them as they want it, one-tenth of the quantity of the mash should be meat meal or scraps. The other half of the evening meal should be grain. When mash is not fed at all, give one quart of grain to the pen for their evening meal. Fresh water before them at all times. The grass dies down for two

months during December and January. I have kale and cabbage to give them, and feed all they will eat.

The houses are kept clean, hay renewed in nest boxes quite often, roosts painted with Lee's lice killer, kerosene with Lee's lice killer in it is sprinkled on dropping boards and roost rods every now and then. The lice or mites will not be troublesome if one is careful. Those things must not be neglected if one wants to keep insects down; half-way measures will not do; eternal vigilance is the only way. When a woman has to do all the cleaning, spraying, etc., she should have one of those force pumps to carry on the shoulder while working. I am going to try one. One never gets through with the work on a poultry farm, but we should simplify the work as much as possible. I do nearly all the work; make brood coops, colony coops, shipping coops, etc., and I know what the work on a poultry farm is. I love the work, and love my pretty chickens better."

Broilers for Profit.

The following is the first prize poultry article in the last number of the Southern Ruralist:

About five years ago we started in the poultry business with the idea of operating a broiler plant exclusively.

We decided that Barred Plymouth Rocks were the best breeds for our purpose, so we purchased eggs from several of the best breeders for the foundation of our flock. We then started right in to raise broilers for market.

As we had no eggs of our own we engaged enough from our neighbors to run three incubators through the season, raised several hundred broilers, lost as many more, and about paid expenses. We also raised about seventy pullets from the eggs purchased, to begin with.

We noticed that the stock from a certain place was better than any of the others. We saved them all, however, and the following season bought another incubator and two hundred more eggs from the same place that sold us the eggs from which we hatched our best stock the season before, also saved the chicks hatched from the few hens we had of this strain.

We had to buy most of our eggs again this season, but were more careful and got much better ones than before. Sold nine hundred broilers and made about 40 per cent profit.

With the 200 eggs purchased and what we set of our own, we raised about 100 hens.

We then discarded all the others, and have bred this strain, exclusively, ever since.

The next season we mated about 30 of our best hens to some very good cockerels, advertised in one of our local papers, sold quite a lot of eggs for setting, also 1,300 broilers.

On the broilers and eggs together, we made about 65 per cent profit.

Finding selling eggs for stock quite profitable, we paid more attention to it, raising better stock and selling more eggs each year, until now our egg trade is about half our business.

We have increased our plant until now we have about 200 hens, six 200 egg incubators, 13 brooders, and sell eggs by the setting, to put under hens, or by the hundred for filling incubators, and market about 1,500 one-pound broilers each season, at 25 cts. each f. o. b. Naftel.

The stock from which we sell eggs for hatching is of the best quality, and noted especially for that business. We attribute our success to the fact that we operate our plant ourselves, not trusting one who does not know, or does not care. We are now making just 90 per cent profit. We run our business systematically, having a certain time for each thing, and doing it at that time. In the rush of the hatching season we set two incubators each week, turning the eggs the evening of the second day, and turn and air them twice each day after, until pipped. When the chicks are all out we take out the trays and leave them over night in the incubator.



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tor. The next morning they are carried to the brooders and let alone until afternoon, when they are given a light feed of chick food, or fine cracked grain, scattered in the litter, and again before night.

The following morning they are given water, which is kept before them all the time, giving fresh each day. Until three weeks old they are fed five times each day with chick feed, or something similar. After three weeks we begin giving some wheat and cracked corn, and by the time they are six weeks old we have substituted other things for the chick feed, and now begin giving some mash food as dry as can be made up, increasing the mash and cracked corn until at eight weeks they are eating nothing else. We feed them heavily of this for two weeks longer, when they are ready for market.

We give animal and green food in some form all the time. The chicks that we keep for stock are not fed any mash, but only dry grain until about twelve weeks old. When they are ready to be put on the range the cockerels and pullets are separated and divided into flocks of about forty each and roosted under Osnaburg fly tents.

For feeding them we use self-feeding hoppers, divided into four parts, which are filled with cracked corn, oats, wheat, bran and beef scraps.

We fill the hoppers once in four or five days, never letting them become empty. We give fresh water every day, from the time they are put on range until they are moved to winter quarters they have nothing but fly tents for shelter, and are hopper fed exclusively.

We winter our stock in good, dry houses, with large yards, half of which are sown to barley and rye. As to mating Barred Plymouth Rocks will say that we use the double mating system, believing that the best results can not be obtained by single or standard mating.

Random Selections.

A lady correspondent of the Poultry Tribune gives some of the results of her experience as follows:

Practice makes perfect, they say, but the experienced poultry breeder knows about how much time and patience it takes to attain anything like perfection in the poultry ranks, and can readily see how easy it is for the beginner, who starts in with no knowledge of the work whatever, to make mistakes. It takes no small amount of pluck and hard work to make a successful fancier, "just how much" none but the experienced ever seem to realize. I have many times wished that I could give some people a little advice in this matter, just for their own good, and yet refrained from doing so, lest they might think, "if she can make a success of it, why not I?" So I have witnessed in silence the start and finish of more than one person, because I have felt that my advice would go unheeded. It looks so easy to them, that little do they realize what lays back of the word success, or rather, what is to be accomplished before this is attained. Do not think that I would discourage this business, but having seen more than one person undertake it, that was entirely unfitted for it, simply because they saw somebody else prospering therefrom, that it cannot refrain from saying, that it certainly is a very absurd and risky undertaking, for anyone to plunge into this work without any experience, or knowledge of it, and expect to make a success of it. How I would like to impress upon such people the importance of a thorough undertaking of the work before embarking, and especially is this